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Probes 'destroyed morale' in CIA, ex-official says

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Washington—A former official of the Central Intelligence Agency said yesterday recent investigations and disclosures have "destroyed morale" in the agency and "very nearly destroyed" its effectiveness as an intelligence-gathering system abroad.

Ray S. Cline, former deputy director of the agency, urged Congress to assign a joint committee of both houses to exercise "rational" control of the agency. He said the agency had made "very serious mistakes," but added they chiefly were made in following "the orders of the President of the United States" regarding domestic activities prohibited by law.

Mr. Cline's defense of the Central Intelligence Agency was even stronger than that of

the outgoing director, William E. Colby. They and a panel of critics took part in the final day of a privately sponsored convocation on national security.

Mr. Colby too conceded the recently exposed mistakes of the agency, including abortive assassination plots against some foreign leaders. But repetition could be avoided, he said, through better guidelines, closer supervision, and protection of legitimate secrets.

Much of the discussion centered on the relative need for so-called covert activities—secret U.S. involvement in the political affairs of other governments. Even Senator Frank Church (D., Idaho), whose Senate committee investigated the agency, conceded the need for covert operations in what he called "a dire emergency."

But, he said, the U.S. should remain in a morally defensible position. "If our hand were exposed helping a foreign people in their struggle to be free," he said, "we could scorn the cynical doctrine of plausible denial and say openly, 'Yes, we were there, and proud of it.'"

In his sharp criticism of the Central Intelligence Agency's secret activity, Mr. Church concentrated on those that went wrong. Mr. Cline emphasized those that went right. The face of Europe might be quite different today, he said, if the agency had not supported free governments in France, Italy and Germany after World War II.

Morton H. Halperin, former defense official and former aide to Henry A. Kissinger, the Secretary of State, opposed any covert operations. "There is no

way to bring that process under democratic control," he declared. Even at a time of disclosure, he said, the U.S. is "involved" in Portugal, Angola and "probably the Azores."

Mr. Cline responded to criticism of assassination plots against Fidel Castro, the Cuban premier, by saying Mr. Castro "seems remarkably healthy today." Indeed, he said, Mr. Castro has sent Cuban troops, "supported and trained" by the KGB, the Soviet intelligence service, to bring about a Communist victory in Angola.

As he has before, Mr. Colby denied that the CIA was responsible for the overthrow and assassination of President Salvador Allende in Chile in 1973. American activity there was in support of "democratic forces," he asserted, although that activity is widely acknowledged to have created the climate for Mr. Allende's overthrow.

"That there can be debate as to the wisdom of any individual activity of this nature is agreed," Mr. Colby said. "That such a potential must be available for use in situations truly important to our country and the cause of peace is equally obvious."

One reason for abuses, he remarked, was the failure of Congress to take responsibility for "the necessary unpleasanties" of intelligence.

Mr. Cline's reasoning on that score was more direct. The activities against Allende, he said, were "laid on" by [former President] Richard Nixon and Dr. Henry Kissinger without much consultation within the intelligence community."

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